



**Testimony of Marilyn Diaz, Esq., AARP Connecticut Executive Council Volunteer
in Support of H.B. 6526, AAC Electric Suppliers**

March 4, 2021

My name is Marilyn Diaz. I am a member of the AARP Connecticut Executive Council and a volunteer presenter for the “What I Need to Know About My Electric Choices” community service presentation. I am here to testify in Support of **Proposed HB 6526, An Act Concerning Electric Suppliers**.

I want to thank the chairs and ranking members as well as all the members of the committee for allowing me to testify before you and for raising HB 6526. I want to spend my time to update you on AARP Connecticut’s “What I Need to Know about My Electric Choices” presentation.

AARP volunteers working with staff at AARP and PURA created this community outreach presentation because of the many problems and issues that our members and others have experienced with the third party electric supplier market. The program is intended to help people navigate the third party market and the State’s energizect.com supplier rate board, learn to read and understand their electric bill and how to determine if entering the 3rd party electric market is right for them. This is an unbiased presentation and we do not encourage or discourage anyone from choosing a 3rd party supplier.

People are asked to bring a copy of their electric bills to these presentations and many people do. I want to highlight some of feedback that we receive from these presentations about the common problems that people still are encountering with 3rd party suppliers:

- People who bring copies of their bills do not even know they are with a third party supplier. Many times, we find that they were fraudulently switched or switched and thought that they would always save with the new company, not aware that they were automatically re-enrolled at rates higher than standard service.
- People do not know that they are paying more than standard service. Most instances of this are as a result of entering a 3rd party contract with terms better than standard service at the beginning of the contract, but are not as good during the outward months when standard service might have lowered.
- People have a variable rate contract even though this type of contract was banned in CT in 2015 [legacy contracts]. There are still 25,000 existing contracts that were grandfathered in and people are automatically reenrolled in them.
- People are in contracts with higher than standard service rates or rates higher than other third party suppliers because they were sold a contract over the phone or by a door-to-door sales person. They are not aware of, nor informed about, the ~~of~~ energizect.com rate board.

- People with low electric usage are not aware the potential savings with a 3rd party supplier can be negated by just one bad month of paying more than the standard service.
- People are in contracts and are losing money monthly but it would cost them more to exit their contract because of cancellation fees.

These are just some of the problems that my fellow AARP volunteers and I hear about when making this presentation. Since 2014, Connecticut has enacted some of the strongest ratepayer consumer protections in the country – for that we thank you but abusive practices still persist. In spite of the pandemic, we are still making electric choice presentations. All of AARP's community service programs have been adapted to a virtual world. I welcome the ability to make our presentation to the committee or to any audience you feel could benefit from it.

HB 6526 will go a long way towards addressing many of the concerns and difficulties that people experience with the current configuration of the third party supplier market. I urge the committee to pass it with the strong language currently in the bill.